reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs. But, with effect from the 8th December, 1994 another two per cent reservation has been allowed. That two per cent reservation is only for certain specified communities. I would like to know the names of these specified communities.

SHRI K.V. THANGKA BALU : Sir, in Maharashtra some new communities i.e. Gowari, Mana, Kosthi, Koli and Munnerwar are included in a special category called a Special Backward Class category.

Mr. CHAIRMAN : Question No 144. *(Interruptions)*.

SHRI S. VIDUTHALAI VIRUMBI : Sir, this is a very important question. It relates to Tamil Nadu. *(Interrutpions)*.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY : Sir, it is a very important question. Please allow me to put a supplementary.

MR. CHAIRMAN : I know that. But, we have covered only three questions. Now, Question No. 144.

Decline in the Production of Pulses

*144 SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that during the year 1950-51 pulses accounted for 16.5 per cent of the food grains, which dropped to 7.6 per cent by 1992-93 ;

(b) whether it is a fact that because of the drop in production there has been a decline in per capita daily availbility from a peak 75 gms in 1959 to 37 gms in 1993 ;

(c) whether it is also a fact that as a result the prices of pulses have risen beyond any calculations since many years, and pulses have become beyond the reach of the poor people ; and

(d) if so, what action has been taken by Government to bring down the prices of pulses and by when ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir

(c) The average annual increase in prices of pulses during last 5 years has been slightly higher compared to general inflation.

(d) In order to contain the increase in prices of pulses, the efforts are being made to increase the production of pulses by implementing National Pulses Development Programme (NPDP). Besides, the import o pulses is being allowed under Open General Licence at a nominal customs duty of 10%.

SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI : Sir, it is very unfortunate that this kind of important questions are treated in such a callous manner. The same kind of problem, i.e. the sugar scandal is there because of callousness. I am surprised that the Minister has no idea about the prices of pulses or the rate of pulse of the people. They have not reacted to it. They say that there is a slight increase in the prices. There are two things. One is the availability of pulses which is becoming an item of luxury. The hon. Minister for Civil Supplies, Shri A. K. Antony, said that if you don't do something about the prices of pulses, pulses are going to become an item of luxury for the poor people. Since there is not much time I cut short my point. I would like to know from the hon. Minister, what they are going to do to reduce the gap between the availability and the procurement which leads to inflation.

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR : Sir, the answer is absolutely correct. The hon. Member has asked about increase in the prices of pulses in relation to increase in the prices of food-grains and the general inflation. The answer is, the increase in prices of pulses is slightly higher compared to the general inflation. *(interruptions)*.

SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI : As far as urad is concerned, the increase is 48 per cent. .....*(interruptions)*..... The increase in the prices of pulses is more than 50 per cent. The Minister says that the increase is slightly higher. The hon. Minister says, "He wants to put the money in the pocket." (..... *interruptions*)..... But, what about the food for the stomach ? He is misleading the House. ..... *(interruptions)*.....

SHRI JAGESH DESAI : Sir,..... *(interruptions)*.

SHRI DINESHBHAI TRIVEDI: This is a racket to import.....*(interruptions)*....

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR : Sir... ....*(interruptions)*...

Mr. CHAIRMAN : This is not Zero Hour. .....(*interruptions*).

Let him speak. (*interruptions*)..... He is answering.

.....(*interruptions*) (Please allow him to answer.

SHRI JAGESH DESAI : Sir,..... (*interruptions*).

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY : He must come and buy pulses along with us. (*interruptions*). The Parliamentary delegation will take him to the market. (*interruptions*)....

SHRI S. KRISHNA KUMAR : Sir, his question was whether there was a rise in prices of pulses in relation to the price rise of food grains in the last four decades i.e. 1950-51 to 1990-91. The answer is precise. We appreciate and we are one with you in saying that the prices have to be controlled and that is precisely why the Open General Licence in both has been allowed. We are simultaneously trying to increase the production of pulses through multifarious schemes including those of the National Pulses Development Board.

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question House is over.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Production of Mint

*145. DR. SHRIKANT RAM CHANDRA JICHKAR :

SHRI RAM RATAN RAM :

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the quantum of Mint (Pudina) produced in the country annually;

(b) what are the various uses of mint; and

(c) what is being done to encourage its poduction ?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI BALRAM JAKHAR) : (a) The annual production of 'Pudina' in the country is not known.

(b) Mint finds its main usage in the pharmaceutical, food flavour, cosmetics, beverages and allied industries.

(c) The Government of India is implementing a Central Sector Scheme for intensifying research and development activities in selected Medicinal & Aromatic Plants including mint. Several improved varieties have been dveloped, in different species of mint and production technology standardised. Financial support is provided to State/UT Governments for production and distribution of quality planting material and for setting up of distillation units under the above scheme.

Erosion in West Bengal

*146. SHRI MD. SALIM :

SHRIMATI CHANDRA KALA PANDEY :

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that an All Party Delegation from West Bengal submitted a memorandum to the Central Government in the year 1992 regarding erosion in West Bengal and

(b) if so, the nature of action taken on the memorandum ?

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES AND THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI VIDYACHARAN SHUKLA) : (a) Yes, Sir. A delegation headed by Minister for Irrigation and Waterways, Government of West Bengal met the Union Minister for Water Resources on 8th September, 1992 and submitted an Action Plan listing out the erosion protection works in the Ganga/Padma and Bhagirathi/Hooghly river system costing about Rs. 356 crores.

(b) Investigation, planning and execution of anti-erosion schemes are undertaken by the State Governments out of their own Plan funds for flood control sector and in accordance with their own priorities. The Centre renders assistance in works that are technical, catalytical and promotional in nature. The West Bengal Government has been requested to prepare detailed individual schemes based upon detailed ground surveys and investigations. Based on the proposals received from Government of West Bengal, an amount of Rs. 1 crore has been released to Government of West Bengal during 1993-94 for undertaking anti-erosion works in Nabadwip-Mayapur area.